

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

YOUTH PROGRAMS
GET A NEW LOOK FOR 2022

SPECIAL CONNECTION
A HEART FOR GOD'S CREATURES

JANUARY 2022



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Northeast Connection is published monthly to communicate with the members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative.

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BUSINESS HOURS

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Offices are closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

DISPATCHING AVAILABLE 24 HOURS AT

1.800.256.6405

If you experience an outage:

1. Check your switch or circuit breaker in the house and on the meter pole to be sure the trouble is not on your side of the service.
2. When contacting the cooperative to report an outage, use the name as it appears on your bill, and have both your pole number and account number ready.

Please direct all editorial inquiries to Public Relations at 800.256.6405 or email publicrelations@noec.coop

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HERE COMES THE SUN

Daniel Webster

General Manager/CEO

The Beatles certainly didn't have solar energy on their minds while recording *Here Comes the Sun*, but the light-hearted hope and good vibes it gives could be the same experienced by those considering solar power.

Solar energy is a popular advertisement subject on TV and social media. It is nearly impossible to watch the news or check in on friends and family on Facebook without seeing an ad promising very low energy bills. Unfortunately, very convincing sales pitches often leave consumers dissatisfied.

We, at NOEC, don't want to discourage anyone considering solar, but we do want you informed and want you to receive exactly what you are expecting. We are frequently asked questions following solar installations because the results don't meet the sales pitch.

If you are considering a solar system, determine your goals for installing a system (to eliminate your electric bill, environmental considerations, etc.) then determine what size and type of system will help you achieve those goals. To help you prepare your evaluation, here are a few key points to review and keep in mind:

- Any tree cover near your system will significantly impact the amount of solar energy received by your photo-voltaic (PV) panels.
- The average, peak generating sun hours in our area total around 4½ per day. While we receive more daylight, peak sun exposure is important to the generation capabilities of PV panels.
- The efficient conversion of sun to energy by PV panels degrades by approximately 1% per year, meaning after 10 years, PV panels are only capable of generating 85-90% of the energy they could generate when new.

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SPECIAL CONNECTION



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CRAIG COUNTY RECIPES



04

YOUTH PROGRAMS ARE HERE!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

1. Eliminate air leaks and drafts
2. Let the sun in during the day
3. Close curtains at night
4. Close unused rooms
5. Turn the thermostat down when you go to sleep

Events are published as space allows and must be submitted at least 60 days in advance. Send information, including phone number for publication, to Northeast Connection Events Calendar, PO Box 948, Vinita 74301 or email to publicrelations@noec.coop

\$100 IS HIDING!

Search the pages of NE Connection for a 6-digit account number with an asterisk on each side. For example: *XXXXXX*. Compare it to your account number, which appears on your monthly electric bill. If they match, contact the cooperative at 918.256.6405, by February 1, 2022, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

JANUARY 2022 EVENTS

Oklahoma Boat Expo

Jan 7-9 | Tulsa

Cox Business Convention Center

Souper Saturday

Sponsored by Ethos Yoga

Jan 8 | Claremore

Lilac District

NEO A&M High School Basketball Tournament

Jan 20-22 | Miami

Multiple Locations

Booklahoma '22

Jan 21-22 | Pryor

Graham Community Center

Lorrie Morgan at the Coleman Theatre

Jan 27 | Miami

Coleman Theatre

Cold Weather Energy Safety

1. Roughly one-third of home candle fires start in the bedroom. Avoid placing candles in areas where you could fall asleep.
2. Portable generators can be dangerous if not handled properly. Since they produce carbon monoxide, never use them indoors. Never plug a generator directly into an outlet. This could cause backfeeding and place utility workers in danger.
3. Plugging too many appliances into a single outlet or extension cord can cause them to overheat, which could start a fire.
4. Pay attention to the weather so you have plenty of time to prepare if a winter storm is forecast. Have your home and car emergency kits ready to go at all times.

January events are subject to date change or cancellation. Please contact the host for most current event information.



HERE COMES THE SUN

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER

- You may not have power from your solar system if NOEC is experiencing an outage at your location. The most prevalent types of systems installed are grid-tie systems. The National Electric Code requires that these systems automatically shut down upon loss of grid power if they remain connected to the grid. Additionally, most installed systems do not incorporate energy storage, such as batteries, to allow energy availability when off-grid. Keep this in mind if one of your reasons for choosing solar is back-up power.
- Solar systems come with short- and long-term responsibilities. If you remain connected to NOEC's electric distribution system, you are required to install a system (at your cost) to protect NOEC line workers and enter into an interconnection agreement. Maintenance and repairs of the solar system will also be your responsibility. It is also recommended that you make contact with emergency personnel and firefighters in your area to notify them of your solar system as it will impact the ways in which they can respond to a fire at your home.
- Research incentives, rebates, and tax credits. You may be eligible for multiple incentives. A good source of information is www.dsireusa.org. In addition, the contractor selling and installing your system should have up-to-date details on incentives available to you.
- Make sure you fully understand the size of the proposed system and what it is capable of producing. Will it offset your energy consumption enough to justify the monthly loan payment on the system?
- Verify the contractor has contacted NOEC and understands the interconnection obligations, ensuring work does not have to be redone at your expense.
- Know up front that an installed, grid-tie system must be inspected by NOEC before operation. We recommend you delay final or substantial payment until after the inspection is complete.

Carefully select your contractor and do not feel pressured to make a fast decision. Below are questions to ask. We strongly recommend you receive the answers in writing. If they fail to provide the answers in writing, consider it a red flag.

How long have you been in the solar business?

Are you licensed in the state of Oklahoma?

How many solar installations have you performed in this area, and can you provide a list of customers to contact for references?

Who will perform the installation? Are they employees of the company or are they subcontractors?

What certifications do installers hold? Is a licensed master electrician on the installation team?

Does the company carry the following insurances: general liability (we recommend a minimum of \$1 million), professional liability, and workers compensation? Have they confirmed the insurance coverages of any subcontractors?

Has the company been party to a legal dispute involving a solar installation that was brought by the customer?

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A number of web resources are available to you when considering solar. Seek as many answers as possible. Don't use the sales and installation company as your only source of information. A good start is energy.gov/solar. Another source is NOEC. Please call us at 918.256.6405 or visit noec.coop. We will be happy to help you understand your energy needs.

SOLAR ENERGY Q&A

As your Touchstone Energy cooperative, we are your source for energy and information. Since interest in solar power generation is growing, we put together a series of questions to help answer questions you might have. Contact us for more information about solar and assistance in making decisions about whether solar is a good option for you. If you have questions please reach out to us at 918.256.6405.

How much does a solar PV system cost?

The price of PV components varies depending on the size of the system (generating capacity), type and quality of the components purchased, and complexity of the system selected. The good news for consumers is that the cost of PV has declined dramatically, while the technology has improved, equally dramatically. Installation costs depend on the size and complexity of the system, but also on the home layout and construction. For example, a simple, south-facing roof allows for an easier install than a roof with hips and valleys. In addition, some homes require structural or wiring upgrades. An average 4 kW system may cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000, before credits and incentives. This is based on a typical installed cost of \$2.50 to \$5 per Watt of distributed generation capacity. To determine your costs, look for online calculators to help you estimate your pricing, and also get bids from reputable installers.

What happens with a solar PV system at night and on cloudy days?

Battery-backed or grid-independent systems use on-site energy storage to store excess energy produced during the day for use at night or when the sun is not producing enough power. Choosing this option will add significant cost and maintenance to your system. Most people opt for grid-connected systems for reduced cost, maintenance, and high reliability. With this type of system, your cooperative continues to provide energy to you when you need it 24-7. Your PV system will produce energy, and maybe even excess energy, on sunny days. Your system will not collect sunlight at night and on cloudy days. That means, you will continue to draw electricity from your cooperative during these times.



Will my Touchstone Energy cooperative buy any excess energy I produce with a solar PV system?

Grid connected PV systems are connected to the cooperative's power lines. That means electricity can flow both ways (to your home from your cooperative, and from your PV system back to the electrical grid). Particularly on sunny days when your energy use may be low, your system may produce excess energy that can flow back to the grid and may be purchased back by your cooperative. Many cooperatives purchase energy generated by a PV system above what the homeowner uses. Give us a call to get specific details for your area at 918.256.6405, including requirements for interconnection, safety, metering, and applicable rates.

How long is the payback period on a solar PV system?

The payback period can range from fewer than 10 years to more than 20 years, depending on the system cost, available rebates and incentives, the amount of electricity produced, and the retail price of electricity you purchase from NOEC. Check with us for more information.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

GET A NEW LOOK FOR 2022



SCAN ME!

YOUTH TOUR

Completing a 6-8 hour community service project between December 1, 2021, and March 12, 2022, will qualify four area high school juniors to win an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the 2022 Youth Tour contest. In addition to the D.C. trip, the four students selected will receive \$500 in spending cash. Should the in-person trip on June 17-23, 2022 be cancelled for any reason, winners will instead each receive a \$1,000 scholarship to a college, university, or trade school of their choice; a 64gb iPad mini w/pencil; and the ability to participate in a virtual Youth Tour experience. Students who are in the eleventh grade and attend school within the NOEC service area of Mayes, Delaware, Craig and Ottawa Counties (or Chelsea High School in Rogers County) are eligible to participate in this contest. NOEC membership is not required.

ENERGY CAMP

Area eighth graders will have an opportunity to create a TikTok video that encourages saving energy as part of the Energy Camp contest. Four winners will be selected to attend Energy Camp May 31-June 3, 2022, and will also each receive a smart tablet computer. Should COVID-19 prevent the in-person camp, winners will still receive a smart tablet computer and the ability to participate in a virtual Energy Camp experience. Students who are in the eighth grade and attend school within the NOEC service area of Mayes, Delaware, Craig and Ottawa Counties (or Chelsea High School in Rogers County) are eligible to participate in this contest. NOEC membership is not required.

COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

The NOEC college scholarship program will remain unchanged for 2022. Four area high school seniors whose parents or guardians are NOEC members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric are encouraged to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship to a college, university, or trade school of their choice. Applications must be received by March 20, 2022. Four winners will be selected.

CLASSROOM INCENTIVE

NOEC is encouraging area teachers to get involved. If an instructor administers either Youth Tour or Energy Camp as part of classroom assignment and produces a contest finalist, he or she could be rewarded with \$100 toward the purchase of classroom materials or equipment.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

A \$200 award is available to each FFA and FCCLA chapter within our service territory. This money may be used by your organization to award an individual (or individuals) for an outstanding accomplishment or may be used to offset program expenses. One submission is allowed per program per calendar year.

For applications, deadlines, and additional information, visit www.noec.coop and click on Youth Programs > Community Services.

Youth Tour Community Service Project

For Area High School Juniors

Tour Date: June 17-23, 2022 | Contest Deadline: March 12, 2022

Contest theme is: "Making a Difference Where I Live"

Four winners will be selected. Each will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on June 17-23, 2022, as part of the 2022 Oklahoma Youth Tour. Each will also receive \$500 spending cash. Should the in-person trip be cancelled for any reason, winners will receive a \$1,000 scholarship to the college/university/trade school of their choice, an opportunity to participate in a virtual Youth Tour experience, and a 64gb Apple iPad Mini.

Eleventh grade applicants who attend public, private, charter, or home school are eligible to participate in this contest. NOEC membership is not required.

Project must be 6-8 hours, documented with photos, and validated by a community representative for whom work is being performed. Community representative cannot be a relative of the student and must be a member of an active community organization. Submit entry form and project photos to: publicrelations@noec.coop or mail this form to NOEC, PO Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301.

Briefly describe project _____

How did you know about this need? _____

Why is this project important to you? _____

Community representative signature _____ **Phone** _____

Student name _____ **Age** _____ **Date of birth** _____

Guardian name _____ **Guardian signature** _____

I give permission for my child to attend Youth Tour if selected.

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

School _____

Teacher name _____

If you were informed about this opportunity at school, please provide the name of the teacher so we can thank them.

Energy Camp TikTok Contest

For Area 8th-Grade Students

Camp Date: May 31-June 3, 2022 | Contest Deadline: March 12, 2022

Contest theme is: "Saving Energy is as Easy as 1-2-3"

Four winners will be selected. Each will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Energy Camp on May 31-June 3, 2022. Each will also receive a smart tablet computer. Should the in-person camp be cancelled for any reason, winners will receive a smart tablet computer and a chance to participate in a virtual Energy Camp experience.

Eighth grade applicants who attend public, private, charter, or home school are eligible to participate in this contest. NOEC membership is not required.

Please tag your entry with #energycampentry. No offensive content (music lyrics/content) will be accepted. Submit entry form and TikTok link to: publicrelations@noec.coop, or mail this form to NOEC, PO Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301.

Student TikTok handle _____ **TikTok URL address** _____

Student name _____ **Age** _____ **Date of birth** _____

Guardian name _____ **Guardian signature** _____

I give permission for my child to attend Energy Camp if selected.

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

School _____

Teacher name _____

If you were informed about this opportunity at school, please provide the name of the teacher so we can thank them.

\$1,000 Scholarship For Area High School Seniors

Deadline: March 20, 2022

Applicants may attend public, private, charter, or home school but must reside in a household served by NOEC, be in the top one-third of his/her graduating class, submit two letters of recommendation (one school source & one character reference), and an official copy of their high school transcript. Return this application with the supporting documentation listed above to: NOEC, PO Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301, or email to publicrelations@noec.coop.

I. Personal Information

Full name _____ Date of birth _____

Home address _____

Parents or guardians (*name and address if not the same*) _____

Household account # with Northeast Electric _____

Home phone number _____ Email address _____

Name of high school _____ Year graduating _____

What college/trade school do you plan to attend? _____

What will be your major field of study? _____

II. Financial Information

Annual household income ☐ \$39,999 or less ☐ \$40,000-\$69,999 ☐ \$70,000-\$99,999 ☐ \$100,000 or more

Number in family _____

Factors or circumstances that affect your financial need _____

Other scholarships, grants, or financial awards you have received _____

III. Academic Performance & Potential: *Please Attach High School Transcript*

High school grade point average _____

Most recent ACT and/or SAT score, plus others ACT _____ SAT _____ Other _____

Honors & recognition received _____

Other academic achievements (*advanced placement course work, vo-tech education, etc.*) _____

IV. Other Activities: *List Includes During High School Only*

Participation in extra-curricular activities _____

Membership in organizations _____

Offices held in organizations _____

Work experience _____ Are you currently employed? _____

What type of work? _____ Other types of work? _____

A HEART FOR GOD'S CREATURES

A SPECIAL CONNECTION

Have you ever known someone who had a special connection with animals? Perhaps you were convinced this someone could even speak the same language spoken by our four-footed friends?

This unique ability has been the subject of books, movies, and television shows. Robert Redford starred in *The Horse Whisperer*, a popular 1998 movie adapted from a Nicholas Evans novel of the same name. Redford plays a trainer with a remarkable gift for understanding horses. Another such “whisperer” is Cesar Millan, who has a television show that features his ability to communicate with canines. Millan takes the most unruly dogs and transforms them into model pets by the end of each episode. It’s truly something to behold. While most of us have no clue what makes our pets tick, individuals like Millan seem to be animal mind readers.

Most of us know at least one individual who has an especially soft heart for the furred or feathered—so much so that they put animals at ease. If you know no such person, here’s your chance to finally meet one.

Becky Isaacson has always had a way with animals. Even at a young age she related to them on a different level.

“I just love animals,” said Isaacson. “Ever since I was little I’ve never been scared of anything. If a dog came running at me barking I would just stand still and let it smell me and we’d be fine.”

Isaacson remembers her father having a similarly gentle way with animals on the family farm where she grew up in Rich Hill, Missouri. She often witnessed his caring nature when handling cows.

“I grew up on a dairy farm and we always had beef and dairy calves,” she said. “I was up before dawn helping dad milk cows when I was five years old. It would be dark, five o’ clock in the morning, and we would be out there gathering the cows. He’d holler ‘Pumpkin! Honey! Sweetie!’ I asked him one day why our cows didn’t have normal names.

He told me ‘The sweeter the name, the sweeter the milk.’ He was such a good man.”



Isaacson moved to Oklahoma in 1979. She and her husband settled in the Adair community. It wasn’t long before she developed a reputation for being able to nurse injured wildlife back to health. Word spread and she soon found herself rescuing and rehabilitating abandoned animals on a regular basis.

Isaacson is a state-certified wildlife rehabilitator and works closely with local game wardens and other licensed rescue facilities. Her operation undergoes a yearly inspection as part of her certification. She follows all health and safety guidelines and encourages a healthy respect for all wildlife. She advises extreme caution for anyone who encounters a wild animal. Squirrels in particular have exceptionally long and sharp teeth, she says. Coupled with a powerful jaw clamp, these cute critters possess a bite that can easily penetrate a human hand.

While Isaacson will rescue about any type of animal, she focuses on rehabilitating squirrels. She has rescued hundreds over the years.

"I always try to give back when I can," she said. "The largest litter I ever raised was five. I've had them as small as my thumb. When they're that small you can see their organs. My husband always joked that one day I was going to accidentally raise a rat thinking it's a squirrel."

Her latest project is four-month-old Rockee, a female red squirrel. Rockee was brought to Isaacson back in August after having fallen from her nest.

"She's to the point now where she can feed herself and has full run of the house," Isaacson laughed. "She plays like a cat and has nuts buried everywhere."

Isaacson said Rockee is being acclimated to a leash so that she can be taken to visit students in the classroom.

"I typically keep one to take around to schools," she said. "With the rest I do what I call a 'gentle release.' If I release them at my place, I have a little basket nailed to a tree with water and food. I'll put them out there all day and if they're still out there at night, they can come back into the house. I do that until they find their way around. I also like to find park-type settings out in the country where they have access to nuts and water. I try to avoid more populated areas where there are people and traffic. Those situations make it harder for them to adjust."

If released near Isaacson's home, they've been known to return for a visit.

"Oh yeah, they'll come back," she said. "We've actually had them come back and scratch on the door."

Isaacson said it is important for baby squirrels to be kept warm and must also be fed every two hours.

"If someone should find a baby squirrel, it's more important it be kept warm. If baby squirrels aren't kept warm, their organs start shutting down and you can't save them. I always tell people to stick them in one of their pockets until they can get them to me. I always keep a hot water bottle in the container with them and if they're tiny they require constant feeding. Most people simply don't have the time to care for them."

Not every story ends well, although Isaacson has a pretty remarkable success rate with her rescues.

"I may lose one out of every fifteen," she said. "It really depends on how they are brought to you or, say, if a dog gets a hold of them first. If they are in good shape, they are going to be fine."

What do baby squirrels eat, you ask?

"I've always raised them on half evaporated milk and half water until I was introduced to the powered stuff designed for squirrels. That's what I give them now. It's more nutritious and the more fat you can get in them, the healthier they'll be."

Interestingly, said Isaacson, one key indicator of a squirrel's health is the color of its teeth.

"If their teeth are red or orange-colored, that means they're healthy."

It is also important when rehabilitating a squirrel to help them maintain tooth and cuticle growth.

"Rockee lets me trim her toenails," Isaacson said, adding that "sometimes their teeth grow too fast. If that happens, we clip them down a little bit with fingernail clippers they're real soft they need something hard to chew on. I always keep black walnuts and deer antlers around for them to keep their teeth gnawed down."

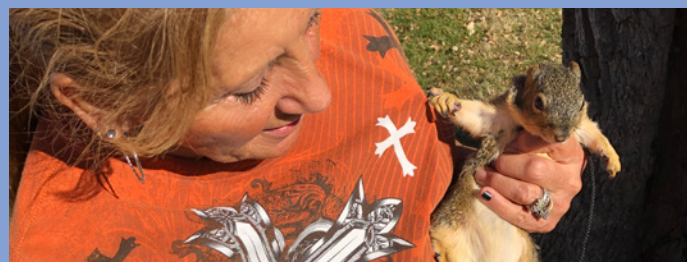
If you have a question for Isaacson, you'll be pleased to know that she is always happy to help and welcomes phone calls from people who are trying to do the right thing.

"I will drive pretty much anywhere to pick up an animal. It doesn't necessarily need to be close by," she said. "I have driven as far as Neosho, Missouri. I am licensed to pick up any animal. If it's something I do not want to rehab, I do work with a larger rescue facility. I can take it to them. If someone has a question, they can ask me just about anything about any animal. If it's something I can't answer, I'll give them the number for Wild Heart. Annette's group over there is very good at what they do."

Isaacson said it's pretty common to hear about someone trying to keep a critter they've found. They may even think they are doing what's best for the animal.

"They need to know it's not legal to possess a wild animal," she explained. "You know you're going to have people out in the country who try to raise a racoon or something. They get away with it, but I wouldn't want to be the one to tell them that's okay."

To contact Becky Isaacson, call 918.948.3490.





FEATURE RECIPES

CRAIG COUNTY



Cook Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 24 servings

PISTACHIO BREAD

RECIPE BY FAYE JOHNSON | WELCH

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 pkg pistachio pudding
- 8 oz sour cream
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup oil
- 2 TBS water

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350° F.

Step 2: Butter bottom and sides of preferred baking pan or dish. I use two loaf pans.

Step 3: Mix together white sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Use half of this sugar mixture and coat the inside and bottom of buttered pan or dish.

Step 4: Combine all other ingredients in a large mixing bowl until blended and pour into prepared pan or dish.

Step 5: Sprinkle remaining sugar mixture on top of batter. Bake for 45 minutes at 350° F. Allow to cool before serving.



STRAWBERRY SALAD & DRESSING

RECIPE BY WILMA WOOLMAN | VINITA

FOR DRESSING

- 1/4 cup oil
- 2 TBS sugar
- 2 TBS vinegar
- 1 TBS chopped onion
- 1 tsp pepper seeds
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/8 tsp Worcestershire

INGREDIENTS

- 9 cups fresh spinach
- 1 pt fresh strawberries
- 1/2 cups slivered almonds

Step 1: Mix salad ingredients together to combine.

Step 2: Blend dressing ingredients together and pour over salad. Serve immediately.